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15.—*France under Richelieu and Colbert.* By J. H. BRIDGES, M. B. Edinburgh, 1866. 8vo. pp. 201.

WE call attention to this little book as one in all respects worthy to be republished in this country. It is not only an exceptionally profound and scientific essay, but it is written in a style at once noble and attractive, and the philosophy contained in it is one which the American people for some time to come cannot study too attentively.

The period of history here treated of has been already ably discussed, at some length, by Mr. Buckle. Nothing, certainly, can be more effective in its way than that portion of the "History of Civilization" which is devoted to Richelieu and Descartes. But all Mr. Buckle's conclusions were far too much influenced by the course of English politics during the last forty years. His work is too much the product of an emancipating school of thought; and it constantly attaches more value to the destructive than to the constructive functions of science and statesmanship. But when it has been elaborately shown how Richelieu, carrying out a line of policy initiated by the great and ill-understood Louis XI., broke the power of the nobles and humbled the clergy, and how Descartes, by his bold dissent from the scholastic philosophy, stimulated the sceptical spirit all over Europe,—when all this has been shown, we have still but half the story about either of these great men. We wish to know, not only what they undid, but what they did. It is to the constructive portion of their labors that Dr. Bridges has more especially devoted himself; and his work is certainly far more philosophical and satisfactory than the portion of Mr. Buckle's work which we have referred to by way of comparison. The policy of that much abused statesman, Richelieu, he exhibits in its true grandeur. He shows conclusively that the system inaugurated by Henry IV., and carried on by Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert, was a system requiring stable peace abroad and an industrial development at home,—and that the careers of Louis XIV., after he gave himself up to the dominion of Louvois and the Jesuits, and of Napoleon I., after he attained supreme power, were flagitious and eminently disastrous departures from this wise policy. But we have not space at present to discuss either the merits or the defects of the book, which throws new light upon a vast number of incidental topics, but still leaves one with the feeling that the subject is not even yet quite exhausted. As we observed above, it ought speedily to be reproduced in this country.